

Va. Soldiers and Airmen part of multi-state response

On page 2: Aviators train with SF

34th CST supports W. Va. water sampling operation

Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, along with personnel from other states, used the skills and training they have for sampling and identifying unknown chemical or biological agents to help West Virginia officials evaluate the quality of water after a chemical spill left more than 300,000 residents without drinking water.

Weapons of mass destruction civil support teams from five different states have been working in the Charleston area since Jan. 9, 2014, to assist the West Virginia National Guard's 35th CST with the collection, data entry and transport of water samples for evaluation. Fourteen Soldiers and Airmen from the Virginia National Guard's Fort Pickett-based 34th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team arrived Jan. 18 to assist with the ongoing water sampling operation.

"The impact of the National Guard has been huge," said Jeff McIntyre, president of West Virginia American Water.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/20/4854/>



Staff Sgt. Nathan Pettway of the 34th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team collects a water sample Jan. 19, 2014, in Charleston, W. Va.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Virginia Guard Soldier to serve as bobsled coach in 2014 Olympics

First Lt. Michael Kohn, a Virginia National Guard Soldier assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, is among nine Soldiers in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program named as members of the U.S. Olympic Team.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/29/4870/>

183rd RTI to host marksmanship matches

The Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute will host two combat marksmanship matches later this year at Fort Pickett, one for rifle May 16-18 and one for pistol June 27-29, as part of the Adjutant General's small arms combat marksmanship match program.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/29/4874/>

Soldiers share experience during information exchange with Tajiks

Four Virginia Army National Guard subject matter experts arrived in Tajikistan Jan. 13, 2014, to conduct an information exchange with the 1209th Peacekeeping Operations Battalion of the Tajik Mobile Forces at Shamsi Base in Dushanbe.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/19/4882/>

192nd Fighter Wing holds second annual awards banquet

192nd Fighter Wing Airmen were recognized during the Second Annual Awards Banquet Ceremony held December 7, 2013. Airmen received awards for Outstanding Airmen, NCO and SNCO of the Year, and other special awards.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/12/4877/>

Mark Your Calendars!

Feb. 7: Volunteer Awards nomination period ends

The 2014 National Guard Family Program Volunteer Awards nomination period is now open, and this is the perfect time to recognize all the outstanding work your volunteers have done for you all year. Their dedication and commitment to helping service members and their Families is truly priceless.

The nomination period for the 2014 National Guard Family Program Volunteer Awards has been extended to Friday, Feb. 7, 2014.

For more information, visit <http://go.usa.gov/Zs9A> or contact Julia Alaric at 804-380-6343 or by email at julia.alaric.ctr@mail.mil.

Virginia aviators train with Special Forces

With snow on the ground and temperatures holding just barely into the double digits, four Virginia National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, along with their crews and support personnel, trained with Soldiers from the Fort Bragg-based Company A, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Jan. 22-28, 2014, at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. The Virginia Guard Soldiers came from the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment and the Chesterfield-based Detachment 2, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, and were on hand to provide aviation support to the training conducted by the special forces troops who are preparing for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"We were excited to get aviation assets because they're sometimes very hard to get," said Maj. A. Christian Sessoms, commander of the special forces troops from Company A. "I can't say enough how easy it's been to make coordinations and facilitate our training with the aviators."

More than 30 Virginia Guard Soldiers made the trek to Fort A.P. Hill working not only as crew on the Black Hawk helicopters, but also providing support to keep those helicopters flying. Soldiers from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment set up and operated a forward arming and refueling point, or FARP, at Fort A.P. Hill to aid in the efficient and tactical refueling of aircraft. Additional Soldiers from the 224th also provided maintenance support for the aircraft as well as flight and mission tracking.

"There's a lot more the SF or any unit can do with aviation assets," said Sgt. Andrew David Noble, a crew chief with Company B, 2-224th. "Also, this gives us a more working knowledge of what's going to happen in country if we deploy."

The aviators worked with the special forces troops to conduct several air assault movements as well as hoist training and also worked through a downed aircraft scenario, creating a realistic training environment for the elite troops from the 3rd SFG.

"What they're able to help us with is that real world piece," explained Sessoms. "Actually and physically being able to load the aircraft, do the hoist training, all these things that we might have to do to complete a real world mission or to save one of our guy's lives, being able to do that here in a controlled environment before going into theater is the difference between bringing everyone home and maybe not bringing everyone home. So it makes our guys that much more proficient for the mission aspect, and it makes us that much safer."

The partnership began when the special forces unit contacted Fort A.P. Hill in advance of their training to inquire about aviation assets. Fort A.P. Hill connected them with a representative from the 224th and the two units began working together to develop a plan that effectively met the goals of both units.

"The lessons learned from a training event such as this proves to be invaluable, not only for the crews flying the helicopter, but also for the personnel tracking the flights as the aircraft performs missions, to those Soldiers refueling the aircraft," said 1st Lt.



Virginia Guard Soldiers conduct air assault operations with U.S. Army Special Forces troops Jan. 23, 2014, at Fort A.P. Hill, Va.

Andrew Mcmillion, commander of Company A, 2-224th.

During the joint training event, Virginia Guard helicopter crews spent more than 50 hours flying and transported approximately 180 passengers.

"The assets that we provide for these elite units who are deploying helps us to continue to be the premier, read, relevant and responsive force," said Mcmillion.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2014/01/28/4863/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Photos: 529th CSSB Soldiers conduct command post exercise

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Photos: OCS Class 57 begins at Fort Pickett

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Photos: SPS visits Camp Pendleton CTC and Langley AFB

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Photos: Aviation's E. Co. fights cold to keep aircraft fueled

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Photos: Aviators practice hoisting at Fort A.P. Hill

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